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AUTHOR Faraday, Sally; Harris, Richard
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ABSTRACT

This guide explains how to use an 11-unit resource pack designed to help trainers and postsecondary and continuing education staff meet the needs of special needs students in Great Britain. The pack aims to enhance the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and confidence of staff working with special needs students; indicate how staff and learners may assist the processes of integration and progression; and provide a flexible, process-oriented approach to staff training. The guide lists the titles of the other 10 units in the pack, explains the pack's purpose, audience, and organization, and defines what is meant by "special needs." The following processes and roles are then discussed: (1) staff development; (2) the staff development facilitator's role; (3) identifying staff needs through structured interviews and self-profiling, peer counseling, group questionnaires, and course team assessment; (4) analyzing the identified staff needs by using sign-posting and other techniques; (5) planning training sessions; (6) implementing and evaluating training sessions; and (7) supporting staff development. The document concludes with a guide to the layout, symbols and abbreviations used in the pack. (ML)

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LEARNING SUPPORT

USER'S GUIDE

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LEARNING SUPPORT

A staff development resource pack for those working with learners who have special needs

USER'S GUIDE

By Sally Faraday and Richard Harris

Training Agency
Moorfoot, Sheffield S1 4PQ

Further Education Unit
Grove House, 2–6 Orange Street, London WC2H 7WE

Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities
336 Brixton Road, London SW9 7AA

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FOREWORD

The staff development needs of teachers and trainers working with learners with special needs were given recognition in *A 'Special' Professionalism* (Stafford, HMSO, 1987) and there could be no better introduction to **Learning Support** than an extract from Chapter II of that report.

> 'If further educational provision is based on the idea of equal opportunity for all, those with special educational needs have the same rights to continue their education as their peers. Their needs in this context are 'special' in the sense that they will require additional support in order for them to be able to take advantage of an equal opportunities policy.'

Once this basic right is accepted, says the report, then:

> 'The central question is not how students with special needs can be placed in mainstream colleges but how the colleges can adapt in order to provide for a wider range of students.'

The same right and the same question hold true for training provision. The report goes on to spell out the implications for the staff involved in the work:

> 'It . . . requires a reappraisal of attitudes to dispel the mystique surrounding the education of students with special needs as something that is essentially different from all other teaching and that is undertaken by teachers who are themselves in some way different. Integration challenges the notion that students with special needs require the expertise of specialist teachers and institutions whose boundaries are well defined, but implies extending the knowledge and skills of all teachers, thus enabling them to respond appropriately to individual need.'

This same concern with meeting individual needs and supporting 'mainstream' staff who are attempting to do that, can be found in documents produced by the Training Agency (formerly the MSC). In *YTS Special Training Needs – A Code of Practice* (MSC, 1988), the approach is clear; the 'mainstream' YTS design framework provides a good basis for planning programmes for young people with special training needs. The section on programme design adds:

> 'Managing agents should ensure that individual training plans take account of the principles of *flexibility* and *progression* and are structured to meet special training needs. In this way all young people, including those with special training needs, will be able to benefit fully from their YTS experience.'

Good practice is seen as the capacity to accommodate many learning needs by staff who have developed a range of training strategies.

Learning Support is the outcome of a successful collaboration between three national organisations that aims to support that good practice by extending the knowledge and skills of teachers and trainers to enable them to meet individual needs. It was conceived by FEU, Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities and the Training Agency, as a response to the staff development needs of those mainstream teachers and trainers identified in *A 'Special' Professionalism* and in the Training Agency's *Special Needs Strategy* as having a major involvement with learners with special needs.

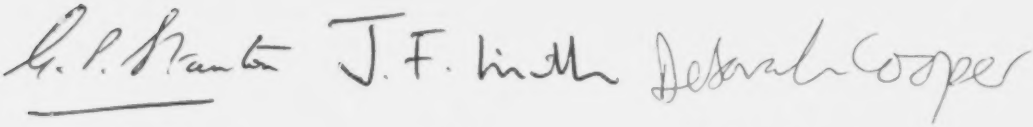
THE KEY PRINCIPLES

Learning Support takes its central principles from *A 'Special' Professionalism*. They are:

- People with special needs have a right to the same education and training opportunities as their peers.
- This means that provision must be adapted to meet their needs.
- Staff working in provision need support in helping them meet these learning needs.
- Every member of staff has a potential contribution to make to the learning of people with special needs.

INTER-AGENCY COLLABORATION

The production of **Learning Support** has been an exercise in inter-agency collaboration and we would wish its dissemination and use to mirror that three-way partnership. No single providers can meet all the learning needs of a learner as she or he moves from school to college and then into training or as an adult learner into college and training programme. The kind of coherence and continuity that brings about successful transition can only be achieved by providers planning and training together. We hope that **Learning Support** will act as a catalyst for regional and local inter-agency activities that will promote a common understanding of the needs of learners with special needs. They are not significantly different from those of other learners, as this staff development pack so clearly illustrates.



Geoff Stanton
FEU

Jim Smith
Training Agency

Deborah Cooper
Skill

INTRODUCTION

THE PRODUCTION PROCESS

The **Learning Support** project had four phases:

Phase 1. A national trawl for existing staff development materials followed by an analysis of the many contributions made by practitioners and trainers from a range of organisational settings.

Phase 2. The writing of new materials and the adaptation of materials received in phase 1. Materials were tried and evaluated by experienced and inexperienced staff developers and trainers working in a variety of contexts.

Phase 3. The assembling of each element of the pack.
Consultation with the users' group.

Phase 4. Editing and production of the pack.

Learning Support has been strengthened in each phase by the involvement of mainstream and 'specialist' practitioners. This commitment was given whole-heartedly and the role of 'critical friend' that many took on in relation to the pack adds to its final credibility. The materials have been used and evaluated by a considerable number of teachers and trainers.

THE AUTHORS

Both authors are experienced practitioners, one working with learners with special needs, the other with teachers who are involved in the work. **Sally Faraday** was based at Streatham and Tooting Adult Education Institute in ILEA when she began work on the project and was already known for the quality of her work there. **Richard Harris**, Principal Lecturer at Bolton Institute of Higher Education, has been active in special needs work and in supportng the National Bureau of Students with Disabilities for some considerable time.

Both share a commitment to the integration of people with disabilities into mainstream education and training.

Their task has been to assimilate the materials and ideas offered by practitioners, to generate effective new materials and to give coherence and continuity to the whole enterprise. We are grateful to them both for their capacity to hold firm to a vision of a staff development pack that would express the real meaning of 'meeting individual needs'.

GUIDANCE AND ADVICE

The authors were supported by a management team of representatives from each of the three sponsoring agencies. Because the pack was to promote simple good practice in training and curriculum development, one of that team was a 'mainstream' staff developer. This group, in turn, was advised by a Steering Committee that included members from national voluntary organisations, DES, HMI, NFER and colleges and training centres.
Their valuable support is gratefully acknowledged.

THE OUTCOME

The strength of **Learning Support** is in its emphasis on meeting individual learning needs by moving through the familiar curriculum process of:

- needs analysis
- design
- implementation
- review
- evaluation

It accepts too, that professionals start at different points in their own learning. This curriculum process and the recognition and acceptance of difference lie at the heart of all good teaching and training. What we do for learners with special needs is no different, but no less.

The Management Team

CONTENTS OF THE PACK BY ELEMENTS

1. Introductory Element

Section 1. Setting the scene
Section 2. Awareness of special education/training needs
Section 3. Undertaking an analysis of needs
Section 4. Establishing a framework
Section 5. Applying the framework

Element 2. Curriculum/Training Programme Design and Evaluation Strategies

- Establishing aims and objectives
  - What is involved?
  - How do you do it?
- Exploring principles of design
  - What they are
  - What they mean
- Strategies for implementation
  - What the alternatives are
  - How to choose them
- Evaluation
  - What it means
  - How to develop a strategy

Element 3. Devising Individual Learning Programmes

- Learner centredness
  - What it means
- Identifying special education/training needs
- Developing individual learning programmes
  - The steps involved
  - The skills required

Element 4. Assessment and Review

- The nature of assessment
- Making pre-admission assessments
- Initial assessment
- Assessing progress
- Methods of assessment
- Final assessment

Element 5. Training/Teaching and Learning Strategies

- Active learning
  - What it involves
- Managing learning
  - Managing time, space and people (both as individuals and in groups)
- Exploring methods
  - What they are
  - How they can be used
- Selecting strategies
  - How to choose what to use.

Element 6. Design and Adaptation of Learning Materials

- Identifying learning materials
- Selecting materials
  How to do it
- Adapting learning materials
  What to consider
- Designing learning materials
  The issues involved

Element 7. Technical Aids and Information Technology

- Using technical aids
  How to include them
- Using information technology
  What it is
- Assessing computer-assisted learning (CAL) packages
  How to do it

Element 8. Guidance and Support

- Identifying the processes involved
- Developing the skills required

Element 9. Sources of Help and Advice / References and Bibliography

- Identifying the need for support
  The processes involved
- Providing support
  What is available
  Where to go
  Who to ask
- References and bibliography

The Resources Section

- Case-studies: some trainees/students

USING THE PACK

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE PACK?

There are increasing numbers of learners with special needs now involved in post-16 training and education programmes. All staff involved in these programmes are likely to meet such learners at some time. However, few staff have had much experience or, indeed, training to enable them to work with learners with special needs. This pack is a response to meeting the needs of these staff.

The aims of the pack are:

- to enhance existing knowledge, skills and confidence of staff working with young people with special training/educational needs;
- to develop in staff appropriate attitudes and awareness of the special needs of young people in post-16 training/education;
- to promote quality in training/education by indicating how staff and learners may, by adapting, assist the processes of integration and progression;
- to provide a flexible, process approach to staff training.

WHO IS IT FOR?

It is intended to be primarily for staff fulfilling the following roles:

TRAINING AGENCY SCHEMES	FURTHER EDUCATION COLLEGES
YTS trainers	mainstream tutors with a major commitment to special needs work
accredited training centres	special needs co-ordinators staff development officers

It will also be of value for:

Other settings
• Health authority staff with an education or training role
• Adult and higher education tutors who may have students with special needs attending courses
• Social services community day care and residential staff
• Voluntary sector tutors and trainers

The needs of these staff may be defined as including some or all of the following:

- an awareness of special needs;
- confidence in working with people with special needs;
- the ability to analyse individual learning needs;
- the ability to develop strategies for planning, delivery and assessment;
- the ability to create and use appropriate resources and aids;
- the ability to utilise appropriate support services;
- guidance and counselling skills appropriate to meeting trainees'/students' individual needs.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY SPECIAL NEEDS?

Individuals with special needs are legitimate learners. They have the same rights to training and education as their peers. What is special about them is that, unless they receive some kind of individually designed **support**, they are restricted in their capacity to benefit from the range of provision that is on offer.

There is an enormous variation in how people learn and this should be matched by a corresponding variety of training/educational options.

It is important to recognise that those with special needs, like all learners, are individuals. They do not constitute a homogeneous group. They will be at different levels of learning and will progress at different rates. Consequently, the kinds of additional support they will need will be diverse.

The principle of equal opportunities for all, underpins these statements.

> '... young people with special training needs (are) those who require significant extra or specialised training and support beyond that normally needed to gain access to and benefit from YTS.'
>
> *(YTS Special Training Needs: A Code of Practice)*

HOW IS THE PACK ORGANISED?

The pack consists of:

- **User's Guide** – mainly for facilitators
- **The Introductory Element** – for tutors/trainers and facilitators
- **Eight elements** of information and exercises – for tutors/trainers and facilitators
- **Resources section** – for use with the pack

The User's Guide explains the purpose of the pack; who it is for; the philosophy of the pack; the content and organisation of the pack and how to use it.

The Introductory Element is the opening to the pack. It provides the basis for understanding and exploring the subsequent elements and introduces the main issues considered in the pack which are:
- the context of training/teaching;
- awareness of needs;
- analysis of needs;
- providing a framework to meet special needs.

The eight elements of information, exercises and further resources provide detailed consideration of each theme. These are:

- Element 2. **Curriculum/Training Programme Design and Evaluation Strategies**
- Element 3. **Devising Individual Learning Programmes**
- Element 4. **Assessment and Review**
- Element 5. **Training/Teaching and Learning Strategies**
- Element 6. **Design and Adaptation of Learning Materials**
- Element 7. **Technical Aids and Information Technology**
- Element 8. **Guidance and Support**
- Element 9. **Sources of Help and Advice/References and Bibliography**

The References and Bibliography for the entire pack is to be found at the end of Element 9 and provides details of all publications cited and of others which may prove to be useful.

The Resources Section contains support materials to use with the pack consisting of a collection of twelve case-studies, which are based on real students and trainees. These may be used for reference throughout, alongside cases known to the participants.

Apart from the **Introductory Element**, which is the starting point for everything, it is not intended that the numbering of the elements should represent any ideal route through the pack. Indeed, it is important that groups negotiate their own priorities – see the following pages – and use the pack as their needs dictate. The signposting system indicates the linking points between the various elements and may help identify pathways through.

HOW TO USE THE PACK – GUIDELINES FOR FACILITATORS

WHAT IS THE PROCESS OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT?

The pack is designed to mirror the process of training and education that is to be used with the trainees/students themselves. The emphasis is on active learning, and learning through experience so the activities which form a major part of the pack provide opportunities:

- to practise and develop appropriate skills knowledge and attitudes;
- to reflect upon the working experience;
- to share and learn from collective experience.

Flexibility is the key in using the pack.

- It is designed to be used in a range of settings recognising the variety of people, priorities and time involved.
- No timings for the use of the pack or a particular element are specified.
- The pace is determined by the users.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE FACILITATOR?

The main role of the facilitator is to enable the effective use of the materials in the pack. There are five aspects to this role:

- identification and analysis of staff needs;
- planning training sessions;
- implementing training sessions;
- evaluation of training sessions;
- support for people in training.

These aspects are now considered in greater detail.

IDENTIFICATION OF STAFF NEEDS

Individual strengths and experiences of staff vary. Therefore priorities for training will vary. There is a range of techniques for identifying the training needs of staff, which include:

- structured interview/self-profiling;
- peer counselling;
- group questionnaires;
- course team assessment.

Structured interview/ self-profiling

This involves identifying individual needs through responses to carefully structured questions. An example is shown on the next page.

Peer counselling

Two staff with similar responsibilities discuss their training needs with each other. By sharing perceptions, individual needs and priorites are identified and clarified.

Group questionnaires

These may be distributed to groups of staff to indicate training needs. They need to be collated in order to identify priority areas. (An example is shown over the page.)

Course team assessment

Where teams exist they provide a useful forum for identifying their own training needs in relation to the training programme or curriculum with which they are involved. This will focus attention on the priorities in a very specific way.

Useful references to this topic are *Planning Staff Development* (FEU, 1987) and *Teaching Skills: Towards a Strategy of Staff Development and Support for Vocational Preparation* (Longman for FEU, 1982).

AN EXAMPLE OF A SELF-PROFILE OR GROUP QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Can I assess the learners' needs?
2. Can I plan for each individual trainee/student?
3. Can I provide relevant learning experiences?
4. Can I support learners with guidance?
5. Can I develop core skills in my area of teaching/training?
6. Can I plan suitable learning programmes for a group?
7. Can I translate programmes into competence objectives?
8. Can I use a variety of learning methods?
9. Can I design and adapt learning materials?
10. Can I assess learning?
11. Can I evaluate programmes?
12. Can I find help and support when necessary?
13. Can I integrate my work with that of other staff?

Each member of staff can identify strengths and weaknesses by responding to the range of chosen questions on the form below by putting a cross at the appropriate place on the scale for each question.

SELF-PROFILE FORM

Question	Skill/experience: Low				High
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					
7.					
8.					
9.					
10.					
11.					
12.					
13.					

A COMPLETED SELF-PROFILE FORM

Question	Skill/experience: Low				High
1.	✔				
2.			✔		
3.			✔		
4.		✔			
5.				✔	
6.				✔	
7.			✔		
8.			✔		
9.			✔		
10.					✔
11.					✔
12.		✔			
13.	✔				

ANALYSING THE NEEDS IDENTIFIED

In the completed example, the staff member has provided a self-generated picture of strengths and weaknesses. This highlights the areas where the individual staff development programme will need to concentrate. In this case, analysing needs and integrating with the work of others seem to be priorities.

By putting together these individual profiles it is possible to identify the strengths and weaknesses, and consequent priorities, of the group of staff with whom you are working. From this you can, collectively, draw up a programme of training.

You may find that priorities vary. In such circumstances, you will need to negotiate.

Negotiation involves everyone working in a defined context, communicating their attitudes and expectations, making concessions and having commitment to the agreed outcome. There are many ways of negotiating, including:

- one-to-one negotiation to agree an individual training plan;
- group discussion on the needs identified, with the task of arriving at a consensus of priorities;
- team decision-making on staff training priorities in relation to the training programme or course.

(You will find more on the processes of negotiation in Element 8, **Guidance and Support**.)

As far as this pack is concerned, once you have completed the **Introductory Element**, such negotiation will help you to identify where to go next. The rest of the pack is structured to enable you to choose your own starting point and routes through it.

The issues covered have been separated into elements so that they can be explored in detail. However, such is the interrelated nature of the issues that they cannot be treated wholly in isolation. The pack has a series of signposts to identify where issues are linked. These signposts indicate where related issues are covered in other elements.

SIGNPOSTING

Here are some examples of how the signposting can be used.

SIGNPOSTING: EXAMPLE 1

A group of staff identify a range of different individual priority areas. They agree through negotiation, that they will start with Element 4, **Assessment and Review**.

In this element they find that a link is signposted between initial assessment and Element 3, **Devising Individual Learning Programmes**.

On completing the study of **Assessment and Review**, they choose **Devising Individual Learning Programmes** as the next priority.

Devising Individual Learning Programmes signposts a link to Element 8, **Guidance and Support**, which they move on to next.

In this example the signposting helped to resolve the different priorities by suggesting a route to pursue.

SIGNPOSTING: EXAMPLE 2

A course team has been asked by the management to develop and implement a new TVEI (Technical and Vocational Education Initiative) framework.

They start with Element 2, **Curriculum/Training Programme Design and Evaluation Strategies**.

Having completed the design, they examine implementation through Element 5 **Training/Teaching and Learning Strategies**.

This leads them on to Element 6, **Design and Adaptation of Learning Materials**.

While following this main pathway, they follow some of the signposts to specific points in other elements such as Element 9, **Sources of Help and Advice** and Element 4, **Assessment and Review**.

PLANNING TRAINING SESSIONS

This can be seen as two stages: strategic and operational.

Strategic stage

Enlist the support of senior staff to ensure that staff are available for training, to give recognition of this staff development work and to make the necessary budgetary provision. These arrangements will vary from establishment to establishment.

Liaise with other facilitators to share experiences and co-operate in training where appropriate. Networks such as those provided by Accredited Centres, Skill (National Bureau for Students with Disabilities), Regional Groups and Regional Curriculum Bases can prove valuable in this regard; they can provide specialist support on training methods and content, where necessary.

Establish regular times of training. It is often useful to have a series of training sessions to provide a focus and a development programme. Time between sessions is useful to enable staff to reflect and practise developing skills with students/trainees.

Operational stage

Ensure that the practicalities have been taken care of, e.g. rooms booked, papers duplicated.

Decide on the role that you will play and on the general format of each session.

Try to ensure that participants have had an opportunity to read the relevant information sections of the pack. (The materials are designed to be copied.) This will save time during sessions and enable concentration on activities.

IMPLEMENTING TRAINING SESSIONS

Some points to consider when running sessions:

- Give direction to the session by stating its purpose and intended outcomes.
- After the first session allow time at the beginning of each subsequent session to review progress and all outstanding problems.
- Arrange the setting to suit the purpose of the session.
- Encourage all group members to participate (the activities will help this in many cases).
- Try to create a climate which offers opportunities for participants to air problems as well as to contribute ideas and practise skills.
- Use the different strengths of the participants. The needs analysis will help identify these. In some cases, participants may be encouraged to lead sessions themselves. This is valuable, because it serves their development and can overcome differences in priorities, by a 'knowledgeable' staff member showing his/her experience with other staff who lack that experience and therefore have identified that gap as a priority.
- Give positive recognition to appropriate and constructive ideas.
- Intervene only when necessary, to give directions or help clarify ideas. The information and activities in the pack are directed at participants, and guidelines on the use of activities is given at the beginning of each one. In some cases, for example when a brainstorm exercise is called for, you can serve as the recorder of ideas.
- Be flexible and modify plans for sessions depending on response. If interesting ideas emerge, not directly related to the theme, be prepared to pursue them. No timings are given for the activities in the pack. This is deliberate as it allows participants to work at their own pace.
- Allow time at the end of each session for a summary and review of what has been learned. Encourage participants to do this.
- Discuss the value of the session. This may give pointers to the future direction for work, perhaps following a particular signpost in the pack, or pointers on methods for the sessions.
- Throughout, encourage participants to take responsibility for their contributions rather than depending on you. This will enhance ownership of the ideas in the pack and promote their application.
- Ensure that participants have set their own plans for action by the end of each session. It is useful to set a date to review what has been achieved.

EVALUATION OF TRAINING SESSIONS

It is important to judge the effectiveness of both the content and processes used in the sessions.

Evaluation involves the ordering and presentation of information so that judgements may be made on:

- the extent to which objectives have been achieved;
- the effectiveness of the training received;
- the relevance of training to the needs identified.

This can lead to a review of the training programme, renewing the priorities and making appropriate modification to planning and implementation.

It is important to decide what is to be recorded and for what purpose, so that the appropriate data can be collected and suitable methods used. There is little value in collecting information for its own sake.

The collection of information should be both a continuous and summative process. It can be gathered in a variety of ways including informal feedback through discussion, detailed questionnaires and reports, and triangulation procedures.

The latter procedure involves feedback from the facilitator, the participants, and the 'third party' as observer.

For details on evaluation processes and procedure see Section 5, Evaluation and Review, of Element 2, **Curriculum/Training Programme Design and Evaluation Strategies**, and *Planning Staff Development* (FEU, 1988).

SUPPORTING STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Effective staff development requires adequate preparation, and support both during and after the process.

The support may take a number of forms, including:

- preparing a clear statement of outcomes;
- preparing adequate advance publicity;
- targeting staff, resources and information;
- ensuring adequate time for training (free of commitments);
- preparing opportunities for practice in different settings;
- mentorship – advising and sharing problems with an experienced/sympathetic colleague;
- action research – carrying out projects within the workplace;
- provision of funding, materials and facilities.

All the above will help staff during training to cope with, and benefit from, the experience.

The training should bring about change in both attitudes and performance. Support is needed here just as much, to help in sustaining the change and providing opportunities to utilise the new knowledge and skills developed.

A GUIDE TO THE LAYOUT AND SYMBOLS USED IN THE PACK

Exercises

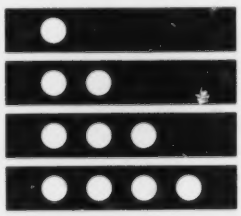
The pack is designed to promote the active learning of staff. To this end each element has a series of exercises related to the information provided on the issues. Each of these exercises will be overlaid with a pink tint for easy identification.

The exercises vary to some extent depending on their content but the basic structure is as follows:

Advance preparation – self-explanatory.

Participation level – whether it is to be undertaken:

- individually
- in pairs
- in small groups
- as a whole group



The number of white circles incorporated in the heading of each exercise indicates which of these four participation levels applies.

Initial Statement of the purpose of the exercise and its general nature.

Methods – what the participants are requested to do. The participants are addressed directly.

Guidelines for facilitators – where the exercise requires substantial facilitator input, guidance has been provided.

Stimulus sheets – with some activities there are sheets to structure the process; with others there are suggested solutions to tasks to form a basis for discussion. There are no right and wrong answers.

The stimulus or task sheets will be included as white boxes within the tinted areas of the relevant exercises. They can be used as they are or facilitators can make their own, based on the information given.

Signposts – appear on the left of the main text and indicate points where links can be found to material in other elements. See page 13 above for examples.

ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations are to be found with varying frequency throughout the pack.

ALBSU	Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit
ATC	Accredited Training Centre
BTEC	Business and Technician Education Council
CAL	Computer Assisted Learning
CET	Council for Educational Technology
CPVE	Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education
CMH	Campaign for People with Mental Handicaps
CSV	Community Service Volunteers
DES	Department of Education and Science
FE	Further Education
FEU	Further Education Unit
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
HEC	Health Education Council
IT	Information Technology
MSC	Manpower Services Commission (see TC)
NBHS	National Bureau for Handicapped Students
NCVQ	National Council for Vocational Qualifications
NFER	National Foundation for Educational Research
NYB	National Youth Bureau
RSA	Royal Society of Arts
RVQ	Review of Vocational Qualifications
SCET	Scottish Council for Educational Technology
Skill	National Bureau for Students with Disabilities (formerly NBHS)
TA	Training Agency (formerly TC and MSC)
TC	Training Commission (formerly MSC)
TVEI	Technical and Vocational Education Initiative
WISC	Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children
YTS	Youth Training Scheme

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

THE STEERING COMMITTEE

Chair:	Geoff Stanton	Chief Officer, FEU
Members:	Simon Allison	City and Guilds
	David Bell	RSA
	Dr Judy Bradley	NFER
	Sue Carroll	ILEA, Kingsway College
	Dr Dennis Drysdale	Deputy Chief Officer, FEU
	Sally Faraday	Project Co-ordinator
	Mike Granger	Development Officer, FEU
	Richard Harris	Project Co-ordinator
	David Hutchinson	Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities
	Merillie Huxley	Project Director, FEU
	Hugh Lloyd-Jones	Somerset Accredited Centre
	Jean McGinty	HMI
	Norma Norris	Training Agency
	Ekwaeju Ohwoisi	Training Agency
	David Stafford	DES
	Charles Stiles	The Rathbone Society
	Richard Stowell	Project Director, Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities
	Anne Weinstock	The Rathbone Society
	Tony White	National Council for Voluntary Organisations

THE MANAGEMENT GROUP

Merillie Huxley	FEU (to April 1988)
Pat Hood	FEU (from June 1988)
Mike Granger	FEU
Richard Stowell	Skill (to March 1989)
Deborah Cooper	Skill (from April 1989)
Ekwaeju Ohwoisi	Training Agency

PROJECT ADMINISTRATOR

Lisca Yee

THE USER GROUP

Sue Carroll
Jenny Clift
Simon Healey
Mike Jelly
Mary Jones
Jo Lacy-Smith
Maria Landy
Gerard Moran
John Pink
Ann Robinson
Corinne Seymour
Jean Sowerby
Charles Stiles
David Swindells
Sonia White
John Young

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